

BARKA CASE UNRESOLVED

French Involvement Still
An Open Question

Paris, Sept. 25 (AP)—After three weeks of hearings in an ornate, high-ceilinged court room, the controversial Ben Barka trial seems as far as ever from the key question in the case:

Were high-ranking officials of the French police system connected with the kidnaping and presumed slaying of the Moroccan politician Mehdi Ben Barka, who was leading a left-wing opposition to the present regime in Rabat?

Antoine Lopez, an inspector for Air France at Orly field and a part-time agent for the French secret services, says they were. His superiors say they were not. No one, apparently, really knows.

De Gaulle Indignant

President Charles De Gaulle, whose cabinet officers are thus indirectly under suspicion, has publicly named Morocco's interior minister, Gen. Mohamed Oufkir, as the chief organizer. Highly indignant, De Gaulle accused Oufkir of conducting a criminal enterprise on French soil with the aid of "vulgar and subaltern" minor French police officers.

Oufkir, backed by Morocco's king Hassan II, has tossed the blame back on highly placed Frenchmen.

The defendants now in custody and, currently on trial, are only small fry. The only question is whether they were acting under the instructions or authorization of their superiors, or whether they acted more or less on their own to assist a plot conceived and directed by foreigners.

The basic facts are known. Ben Barka, Oufkir's political enemy, disappeared last October 29 from the Boulevard St. Germain on the Paris Left Bank and has not been seen since.

Was On Way To Lunch

Ben Barka had just arrived by plane from Geneva. When seized, he was en route to a luncheon meeting with a French movie producer and two other persons to discuss a projected film, a semi-documentary on the liberation of colonized areas, a topic dear to Ben Barka's heart.

Those who seized him included Lopez and two minor French police officials, Louis Souchon and Roger Voitot. When one of these policemen flashed a badge, Ben Barka followed them without question, apparently thinking he was being taken to a station for a routine identity check.